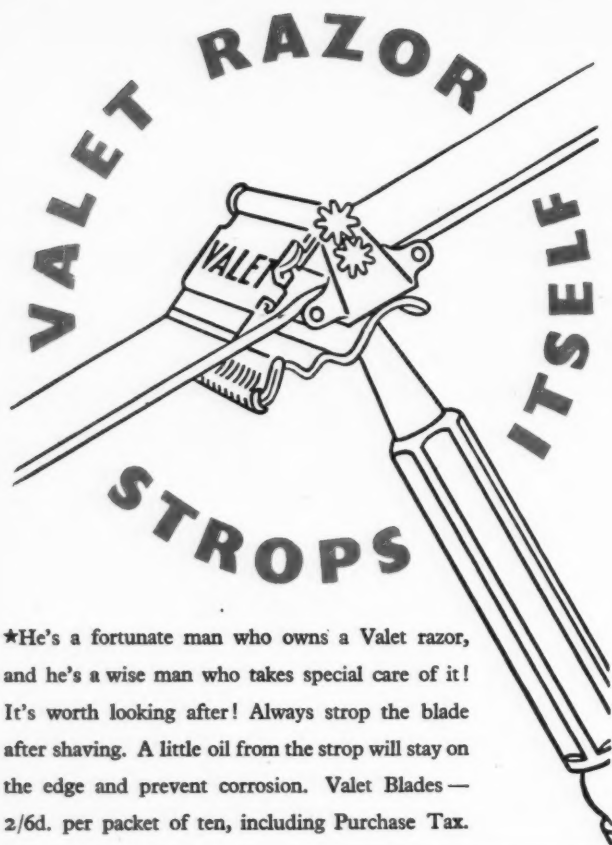


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For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

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★He's a fortunate man who owns a Valet razor, and he's a wise man who takes special care of it! It's worth looking after! Always strop the blade after shaving. A little oil from the strop will stay on the edge and prevent corrosion. Valet Blades — 2/6d. per packet of ten, including Purchase Tax.



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LIBERTY SHOES Ltd., Leicester



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THE prevalence of indigestion is one of the after-effects of wartime conditions. Nervous tension, lack of time or opportunity to prepare regular meals often acted adversely on the digestive system. To the digestion affected in this way the important essential is relief from strain. This can be accomplished by avoiding, where possible, makeshift meals and snacks, taking instead a cup of 'Ovaltine.'

Delicious 'Ovaltine' is a scientifically balanced combination of Nature's best foods—malt, milk and eggs—and provides concentrated nutriment in a form exceptionally easy to assimilate. Without digestive strain this nourishment is rapidly absorbed to bring quick reinforcement of nerve-strength, energy and vitality.

A cup of 'Ovaltine' is very simple to prepare. When made with milk it has, owing to its special properties, the important advantage of rendering the milk much more digestible and assimilable, as well as more palatable. For this reason 'Ovaltine' has proved an outstanding factor in extending the consumption of milk—particularly among children—and its concentrated nourishment increases the nutritive value of milk to the greatest possible degree.



Prices in Gt. Britain and N. Ireland, 2/4 and 4/- per tin

P658A



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100 for 15/-

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SMOKING MIXTURE
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Silversmiths to
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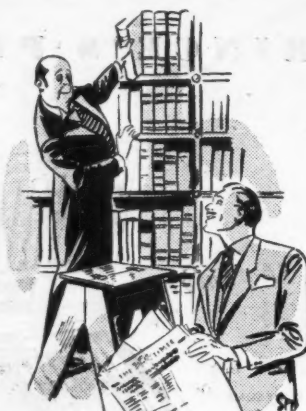
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Carlisle**
*Manufacturers
of Biscuits*

ESTABLISHED 1831

**STILL THE LEADERS
FOR QUALITY**

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ON THE SHELF

"Hawkins, why are you poised at that dizzy height?"

"I am searching, Sir, for the third volume of Plutarch's Lives."

"And why this sudden yearning for classical biography?"

"I do not require Plutarch for my own consumption, Sir. It is the result of a telephone request from Mr. Basil."

"I should hardly think it is in Basil's line either."

"No, Sir. But it was behind that particular volume that he concealed his private Rose's Lime Juice at the party, fearing that supplies might run out."

"They didn't."

"I know, Sir. But now Mr. Basil plans a party at his own flat, and he wants his Rose's urgently."

ROSE'S—There is no substitute

*...but I've got a tin
of NESCAFÉ!*



We don't keep Nescafé up our sleeve. It's just that supplies can't keep pace with ever-growing demand. But it may be your turn soon. And then, a spoonful in the cup, near-boiling water, and hey presto! A quick cup of fragrant full-flavoured coffee. No bother to make, no bother-some grounds. Just enjoyment of a good cup of coffee.

**NESCAFÉ IS A
SOLUBLE COFFEE PRODUCT**
composed of coffee solids, with
dextrins, maltose and dextrose
added to retain the aroma.

17

A NESTLÉ'S PRODUCT



With the easing of official priorities, our pumps, with the accumulated improvements of 6 years, are again being made for normal trading. Deliveries, for so long a dream of the Never-never-land, are far from adequate—but are real enough to justify reversing the nursery plumstone jingle. "This year" at least sees a beginning.

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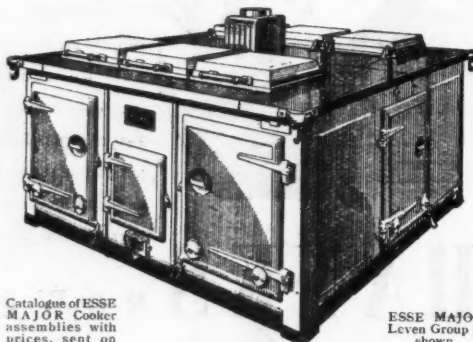
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CHILD HE
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SEEN**



Leave at last! Father is home again and this time, not only his wife but their child—their first—whom he's never seen, greet him with outstretched arms.

How proud he is! Snapshots after all don't tell one much, but here's the finest and best baby in the world.

When natural feeding failed the doctor advised mother to get Cow & Gate Milk Food, and baby from that day never looked back!

Why not get COW & GATE for your baby today and also have the pleasure of seeing the look of pride on your husband's face when on his return home he sees what your loving care and Cow & Gate have together achieved!

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—INCE & MAYHEW "UNIVERSAL SYSTEM
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Not so many people nowadays are furnishing "elegant and superb." The "grand manner" is out of tune with our lives to-day. But more people than ever before want furniture which combines practical simplicity with sound workmanship and good design. For these people Heal's made furniture of character and individuality before the war and will be making it again directly fine timbers are once more available.

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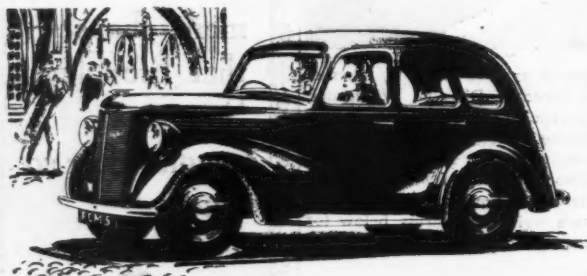
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WE THANK Atco Owners for their understanding attitude regarding the reconditioning of their machines. For, though we put every man and every square inch of Depot space on to the job, we still cannot cope as quickly as is needed with the huge pent-up demand for maintenance. Depots are doing their utmost in the tradition of Atco Service and if they can possibly help you they will. Conditions are getting better every day as the difficult problems of our change-over are met and overcome.

First of the post-war range of new Atco Motor Mowers will shortly be available in limited numbers. Full particulars and prices from your Atco Depot or from your Retailer.

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Your Ford car . . .

What a grand day that will be —when a call from your Ford Dealer tells you that your "Perfect" (10 h.p.) or "Anglia" (8 h.p.) car is ready and waiting to give you years of comfortable, lively motoring! And, when you get behind the wheel and drive it away, you will know how wise you were to wait.

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THREE NUNS SAVES MONEY

—because of its
SLOW-BURNING CUT

There are two special reasons why "Three Nuns" Empire Blend Tobacco saves the smoker money. It is scientifically cut to burn slowly, each ounce lasts longer, you smoke fewer ounces a week. It is made from fine leaf which is favoured by the lower duty on Empire Tobacco. To enjoy the fullest pleasure of smoking at a moderate cost, take to "Three Nuns" Empire Blend.



Three Nuns
EMPIRE BLEND

2/7d AN OUNCE

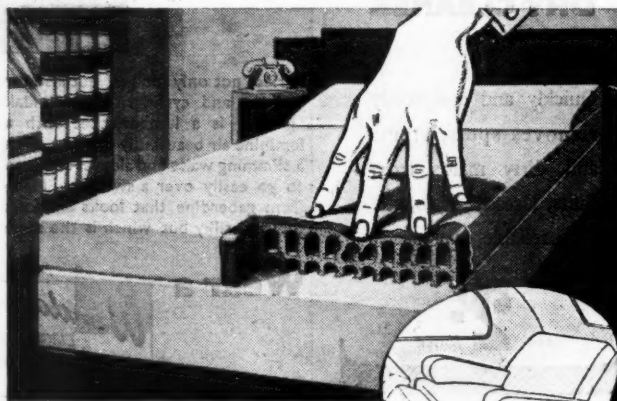
'Cut for economy'

Also **THREE NUNS**
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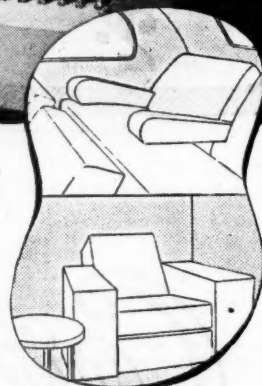
AT **2/10½ AN OZ.**

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PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCX No. 5491

April 3 1946

Charivaria

WOMEN were among a party who watched for a ghost in a haunted house. They were after the sheet.

A veteran seaside pierrot says that the most nerve-racking experience he ever had was to play before an audience of children who had all been given a bag of cherries to eat during the show. Not a turn was left unstoned.



"KEEN VOLATILE WORKER for interesting nursery work."
"Situation Vacant" advt.
in farmers' journal.

Now, Sal!

Ministry of Food recipes are tested before they are issued to the public. It is denied that some are published posthumously.

Those who dodge paying their radio licences are now wondering how they can get out of having to pay their M.P.s nearly double.

"One thing about the newsprint shortage," says a nature-lover, "is that there is less litter at beauty spots." The fields are no longer white with dailies.

A correspondent of a newspaper says that he applied over a month ago for permission to open a fish shop and so far has heard nothing. In the meantime, the queue outside is showing signs of impatience.

Although old customs seem to be dying out, we understand that a few austerity fools were made of unsuspecting people on the First of April.

"A hand operated boring machine with set of bickering governors."
Sale catalogue.

No reference intended to any existing wireless set.

About all that this country has seen of the Dove of Peace so far is its bill.

Cattle are required by law to have a minimum space per head when travelling by rail. This of course is the reason why they so seldom elect to go by passenger train.



A provincial lady says she was amazed to find such a comprehensive range of cosmetics in the London shops. In fact she purchased an eyebrow pencil and painted on a very surprised pair.

Winnie the Pouf

"Mr. Churchill, with a cigar in his mouth, waved cheerily to the crowd and gave his familiar 'V' sign, and as he walked down the gangway there were tremendous cheers."—Daily paper.

"At one time prize dogs were given champagne," says a fancier. But nowadays the cupboard is often bare. Not even a Beaune.



Romance

(On reading the Ministry of Food's new slogan "Join the Crusade against waste of bread.")

SET in my hand the sword Excalibur,
Give me the helm, the shield, the glittering spur!
Long ere the white loaf fades into the brown,
The trumpets blare; the drawbridges are down,
The mailed knights set forth to meet their fates,
Leaving no crumb behind them on their plates,
Through rank and file the watchword has been spread:
"I will not eat a second slice of bread."
Take all those rubbery bits of crust away
To form the puddings of a future day.
"Let aught remaining," the loud heralds cry,
"Not in the dust-bin but the pig-bin lie,
Hail Fame and fortune, fantasy and myth!
Forth to the high adventure with Ben Smith!"

So when I find you picking up a pin
I often deem you are a Paladin,
Or see the heroes sitting rank on rank
Who left their money in the Savings Bank.
And steered their good ships through the crashing rocks
In seatless trousers and in twice-darned socks.
Who is the happy warrior, who most blessed?
He has his ancient trousers cleaned and pressed,
And gains Elysium, when his labours cease,
Through frying bacon with a bit less grease.
The dauntless champion in a thousand fights
Forgets not to turn off the electric lights,
And still the blackbird with his tuneful throat
Reminds him of the tax collector's note.
Austerity divine! O nymph most chaste!
Come let me clasp thee round thy want of waste.

EVOE.

The Unrationed Egg

"I WAS lately given an egg," began Seaton, "by a friend, upon whom I had called, on the further side of Dorking."

When I had congratulated him, he settled himself more comfortably in his chair, pushed his hat to the back of his head and went on:

"It was a fresh egg, and my friend when he presented it warned me, with a whimsical smile, that I might have some difficulty in taking it with me to London. 'I don't know whether you are aware,' he said, 'that the police are carrying out routine inspections of motor-cars as part of a new campaign against the black market. You may have seen in the newspapers that a number of motorists have been stopped recently in the Home Counties and had their cars searched for foodstuffs illegally obtained. The authorities are particularly interested,' he added significantly, 'in poultry and eggs.'"

"Now you are not to suppose," said Seaton, "that I am so foolish as to imagine that the possession of a single egg would inculpate me in the eyes of the police. Such a thing might well have come into one's hands under the existing rationing scheme. But the fact remains that as I drove off with my prize in the direction of London I became increasingly determined that they should *not* find this egg, search how they might."

"I am of course, like any other reasonable citizen,

entirely opposed to black-market transactions, and I do not fail to realize that it may well be necessary, if such practices are to be stopped, for the police to hold up and examine the cars of private motorists. But it is possible, while accepting in principle the necessity, and indeed the desirability, in the public interest, of such a procedure, to resent with the utmost bitterness the prospect of becoming oneself the victim of it. Do you not agree?"

"It is a weakness common to humanity," I replied, "to arrogate to oneself privileges and rights which one would unhesitatingly deny to the rest of mankind."

"Exactly. The more I reflected on the matter, the more intolerable it appeared that I, a person of integrity not merely innocent of but constitutionally incapable, as I think, of criminal practices, should be accosted and publicly searched on the King's Highway, and the more determined I became that the aggressors—for it was in this light that I now looked upon the police—should gain no smallest shadow of satisfaction from their proceedings. I made up my mind, in short, to conceal the egg."

"I understand you," said I.

"Now it is scarcely possible for a man of any education, confronted by the desire to hide an object, any object, from the prying eyes of the police, not to be put in mind of the excellent M. Dupin and the methods adopted by him in similar circumstances."

"True," I interposed. "Or rather the methods adopted by the Minister D—, for it was he, after all, who actually applied the principles of concealment which it was the business of M. Dupin to deduce."

"I see," observed Seaton with a smile, "that you are hardly less keen a student of *The Purloined Letter* than I am myself. You will understand then that I very soon abandoned any idea of attempting to conceal the egg by the physical unlikelihood or *inaccessibility* of its hiding-place. I had no reason to believe that the police agents of the Home Counties were in 1946 less painstaking or less skilled in the investigation of nooks and crannies than were their colleagues of the Parisian police so long ago as the autumn of 18—. They would, I knew, examine every inch of the floor-boards of my car with microscopes, probe the cushions with fine long needles, and scrutinize the panel of my dashboard for grains of gimlet-dust. I did, it is true, turn my attention for a moment to the engine and bonnet of the car, with some idea of introducing the egg into the sump or radiator, but a moment's reflection showed that I could not make use of the former hiding-place without the loss of all my engine oil, nor of the latter without rendering the egg unfit for consumption."

"How so?"

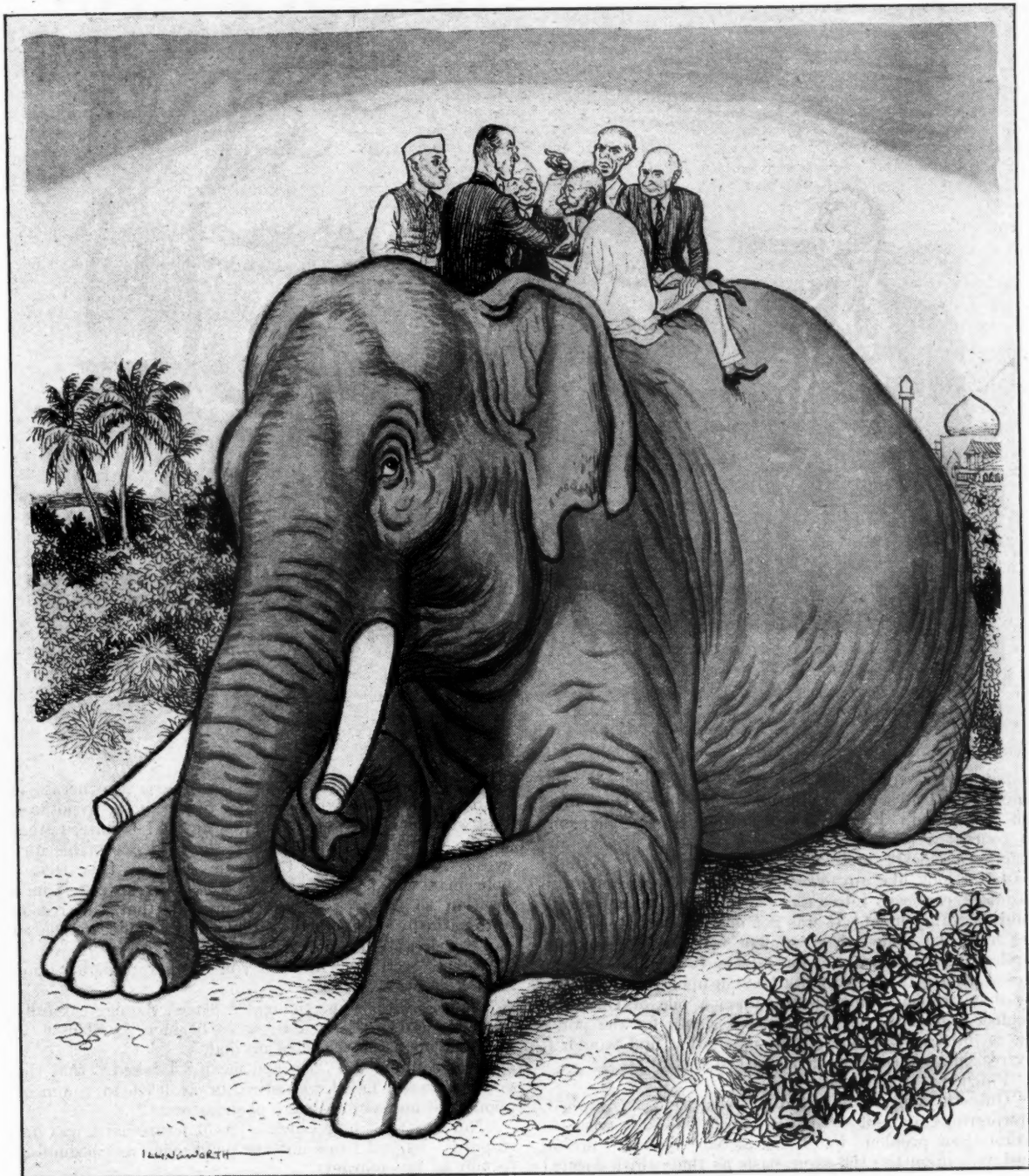
"I abominate a hard-boiled egg," said Seaton. "I rejected too, for a number of reasons, the possibility—if that is not too strong a word—of deflating the spare wheel and inserting the egg between the inner and outer tubes, for though unwilling to believe that the police would go so far as to thrust long needles into my tyres, I thought them fully capable of re-inflating the tyre and making careful admeasurements of the volume of air admitted and the degree of resistance to its entry."

"In which case," I observed, "a tell-tale bump or swelling would inevitably have appeared on the outer cover."

"Either that," he agreed, "or the excess of pressure about the minor axis of the egg, which we may call *q*, over the pressure, *p*, at the extremities of the major axis would have caused the entire shell to collapse."

"Proceed," said I, laughing.

"I was forced therefore, like the Minister D—, to consider the virtues of *simplicity*—of attempting, that is, to



THE INDIAN "WORKING PARTY"



"You mightn't believe it to see him now, but that old fellow heard the first cuckoo in the season of '08."

make the egg so obvious that it would be overlooked. But here I found myself in a difficulty with which D—— had not to contend. For he, it will be remembered, had only to conceal a *particular* letter, not the existence of any letters whatsoever, and was therefore able merely to make his letter look like any *other* letter and to thrust it, thus disguised, carelessly into a rack. But I had no such simple solution to my hand. It was not open to me to make my egg look like some other egg, nor to thrust it, however carelessly, into any place whatsoever. It would have been useless, that is to say, to write DANISH upon my egg and to lay it, as though haphazardly, upon a pile of Dutch or English eggs (even had I possessed them), for the police are as interested in one egg as in another and would, if my reasoning is correct, have pinched the lot."

"Pinched?" I repeated.

"Only the vulgar are afraid of vulgarisms," he replied, interpreting my look. "I was faced, in fact, with an entirely new problem, but I saw at once that its solution must rest upon the self-same basis as that which formed the foundation of the Minister D——'s plan—or for that matter of M. Dupin's elucidation of it."

"You refer," I said, "to the identification of your intellect with that of your opponent."

"Precisely. In what circumstances, I asked myself, will a policeman, when brought face to face with an egg, indeed while actually observing the egg and noting its

similarity in colour, shape and size to eggs in general—in what circumstances will he decline to accept the hypothesis that what he is looking at is in fact an egg? What, in other words, will make him disbelieve the evidence of his own eyes? And the answer I gave myself was this, that a policeman will so behave if, *and only if*, the egg is in a position so bizarre, so unaccountable, that the reason automatically rejects the possibility that an object so placed can conceivably be an egg."

"Good," said I. "And did you succeed in hitting upon such a position?"

"I did. After some thought I placed the egg carefully upon the crown of my hat, or to be more particular, in the dent upon the crown of my hat."

I was astounded. "Do you mean," I asked, "that the police actually failed to notice, or at least to comment upon such an extraordinary phenomenon?"

"Not exactly," he replied. "As it happened I was not stopped. Indeed I saw not one policeman from beginning to end of my journey."

"In that case," I observed in some disappointment, "the efficacy or otherwise of your remarkable *ruse* has still to be proved. We cannot yet say with certainty that an egg worn on the crown of a hat will altogether escape remark."

"Perhaps not," he said, smiling; "except that I am wearing it there now."

H. F. E.

Lady Addle and the Boat Race

Bengers, Herts, 1946

MY DEAR, DEAR READERS,
—What memories does the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race conjure up to all who love aquatic sports, amongst whom my own family must surely stand very high. From my earliest youth I recall boating expeditions on our beautiful lake at Coots Balder, where Papa would allow us—so great was his faith in our prowess—to go out on a calm day entirely alone except for the boatman and one governess. The great joke used to be to try and upset her out of the boat, as governesses could seldom swim in those days. Then one day we had a new Swiss governess, who was not only an expert swimmer but also exceptionally strong. She pulled my youngest brother Humpo out of the boat too and swam ashore towing him behind her. She was instantly dismissed of course for such frightening and cruel behaviour to a child, but somehow “the governess trick,” as we used to call it, was spoilt for us by that unpleasant episode and we never essayed it again.

How well I remember my first Varsity Boat Race! I was about twenty-two and Mipsie nineteen, and we went as guests of some old friends, Colonel and Lady Agatha Blood-Money, to a balconied window of a factory at Barnes which commanded a magnificent view of the course. In those days of course one did not know anything about factories or factory people, so it was rather a shock to find that the young son of the owner of the business—a Mr. Winch—was of the party. However, he had very pleasant looks and manners, and had actually been at Eton in the same house as my brother Crainy, which gave him a certain standing of course, so I decided that the policy Mama would most approve would be to answer him if he went so far as to speak to me, but not volunteer any remarks on my own. What was my horror when, in the middle of lunch, Mipsie suddenly announced that she had always been interested in factories (very curious this, as I had never heard her express such a view before), and she then went on to ask Mr. Winch innumerable questions about the factory itself, which he answered eagerly, ending by suggesting that, being Saturday and the works being closed, he should show Mipsie round before the race. In vain did I frown and make signs to my sister, for whom I felt, in Mama's

absence, I was responsible. Mipsie did not see. She has—I have often noticed—wonderful sight on some days, and is quite short-sighted on others. I suppose that is part of her enchanting whimsical nature—as wayward as the ever changing sea.

However that may be, Mipsie and Mr. Winch disappeared, and did not return for forty minutes, by which time the race was over. They told us they had seen it from another window. Rather to my surprise, Colonel Blood-Money looked up at my sister with a twinkle and inquired “Who won, Mipsie?” “He did,” she replied, and I have never understood to this day what she meant, nor why our host laughed so heartily at her words.

As I say, we have always loved boats and boating. Crainy, the athlete of the family, once played twelfth man for Leander cricket team, while Mipsie became a real devotee of punting—or rather of being punted—and claims that she knows intimately every backwater on the Thames. “It is the lonely, unsequestered spots I love best,” she has always said. She is indeed a true child of Nature.

I myself have always found it a little difficult to determine which side I was supporting, as the Coots are a Cambridge family, while every McClutch who does not go to Sandhurst patronizes Oxford. Accordingly, I used to make dainty little favours from our own snow-white Leghorn's feathers, dyed by my own hand, of both light and dark blue, so as to be fair to both parties. There used to be great competition for these amongst the tenants, and one boy—Ernie Eales, son of a keeper, once begged ten which I gave gladly for enthusiasm delights me. What was my horror later when Addle discovered him using them as fishing flies to poach on the two-mile stretch of the Itchin which runs through a corner of our garden. I fear ingratitude is very prevalent among the best of tenants.

I will end with another story of the Itchin—a delightful one this time—involving my little grandson, Hirsute White, Margaret's boy, who is now, to our great joy, living at Little Bengers Farm. Hirsie is an exceptionally intelligent child, and last Sunday, when shown a newspaper picture of the Boat Race, he immediately said “Bo!” His father was so struck by this that he explained to Hirsie something about boat-races, and also bought him a toy boat in the village. Later the same

day Margaret and I went to a Women's Institute meeting, leaving Hirsie and his new boat with Addle, who adores his grandchild and is never—or seldom—tired of playing with him. At once Hirsie tugged Addle along towards the river, saying “Bo-race, bo-race, grandpa,” and when he got there threw the little boat into the river and pulled it along by its string. Then, to his grandfather's great mystification, he began to push him towards the river too. “What is it, Hirsie? What do you want?” asked Addle. Hirsie kept on pushing for all he was worth, and suddenly my husband grasped that he was supposed to go into the river and pretend to be the rival boat!

“I can't do that, my boy,” said Addle, but Hirsie broke into such a storm of crying, and kicked his grandfather so hard (he has a strong will, like every genius) that Addle was touched and waded into the Itchin up to his knees. In high glee, Hirsie pulled his boat along and Addle followed behind—for the little chap naturally wanted his boat to win. This went on for half an hour, then Hirsie got tired and demanded tea. How Margaret and I laughed when we got home from our meeting! Though we scolded Addle a little for letting Hirsie get too near the river so that his tiny feet got rather damp. But he is none the worse, I am thankful to say, and already threatens, bless him, to make Addle a Grand National horse next week, if he has recovered from the heavy cold which is at present keeping him in bed.

M. D.

The Very Tame Miss Sake

IT really is embarrassing,
Each time I meech a spake,
No matter how I tight my bung,
Nor how much tare I cake,
The same old rabbit hears its red;
The very tame Miss Sake—
And once a rabbit's taken hoot
It breaks a lot to take.

I give a portionary cause—
My bright of fancy's flake—
And then proceed with careless bound
Astare of what's at wake;
But all the wear in all the curled
My tareless caulk can't break—
I do declare I've nipped up Slough!
I have? For seven's hake!

Out

BY the time we have carried our cardboard boxes to the covered truck the N.C.O.s have long ceased calling us "Sir." They are just bored with us. The kindly provision of a small wooden staircase to enable us to climb in is obviously the product of official policy.

We lurch out through the gates of our last R.A.F. Station, twenty or so (can we really say "ex-?") officers brought together haphazardly, with no more homogeneity than is afforded by coincidence of our group number.

It is a lovely day. We remember a day like this four, five, six years ago. When I first put this uniform on (*pom, pom!*). But in most of our cases it was probably not this uniform or even one like it, but a thicker and less elegant one; and when first we showed it to our wives, so proudly, they wanted to weep because our trousers were too short and the tails of our tunics stuck out fanwise, and they had cut off all our beautiful hair except for a butcher-boy tuft in front.

Of course we have never been so fit as we were during those first eight weeks when we stamped up and down the promenade all morning and stamped through the countryside all afternoon, singing fiercely, and fell ravenously on our tea—tinned salmon on a tin plate; and somebody else had always taken the last of the jam. The whole business was poignantly noble and potentially heroic.

The officer who lectured us so painfully on good-conduct badges . . . Every time he leant on the piano the keyboard lid fell down with a jangling crash, and he hadn't any more sense than to put it up so that it could fall down again; he kept taking his gloves off and stuffing them in his pockets and then couldn't remember what he'd done with them. He got a laugh when he told us that after six years' good conduct . . . Six years!

Six years.

We got into trouble, and out of it. How immensely serious it was to have a cap-button upside down on parade! "Escort, Accused and Witnesses . . .!" We got to be pretty strict ourselves after promotion to sergeant. "How do you think we're going to win this war if you . . . eh? Do you suppose a German soldier would ever . . .? What have you got to say to that, eh? Don't let it happen again."

For a thrill nothing really compared with being promoted to sergeant. Of course there was our first day as a

corporal, when some erk in a barrack-room whispered "Look out! here comes the Corp."—and we turned round fearfully, not realizing that it was us. But there was something about being a sergeant. We had a thousand music-hall jokes behind us. We appeared in illustrated papers.

That was a night when we rolled the W.O. up in the linoleum and he slept until the morning fatigue party shuffled sleepily in with bald and leisurely brooms. And when we hung Boris the Binder on the mess hat-pegs by his belt and he had to stay there until the buckle gave way.

And we developed that parade-ground voice . . . "Squ-a-a-a-a-ad!"

It used to go on all over the square.

"SQU-A-A-A-A-AD!"

"Squ-a-a-a-a-ad!"

And the W.O., towering and terrible, moving from squad to squad. Somebody said he was back as a cinema manager in Nottingham. "Three-and-sixes, this way. Back against the wall, please, half-crowns."

"Squ-a-a-a-a-ad!"

Never to be able to shout at the full extent of one's lungs again!

The truck sways on. We are passing an airfield. The broad runway ribbons out endlessly. Here are the huts. Huts and more huts. Rolls of rusty wire; the clerk of the works' little shack with snugly smoking chimney; two airmen in shirt-sleeves punting a flabby football, another carrying towel and soap, another at work on an inverted bicycle . . . more huts, a bomb-dump, a decontamination centre, shelters, more shelters . . . the cook-house, belching darkly . . .

Two, three, four, five Dakotas, with those austere aluminium seats, no doubt, from which we peered down at Corsica slipping greenly away beneath us, and the sand of Heliopolis, and Crete (where the port wheel wouldn't come down, and later, when it did, we drank wine from jugs in Heraklion) and Castel Benito, and Pomigliano, and Habbaniya on the murky Euphrates. A Beaufighter. Corney Andrews couldn't get out of his Beau; and one of the rescue squad swung an axe and chopped the ear-piece off his flying-helmet. "It shook me, I'll tell you," Corney said afterwards.

Everyone said that at the O.C.T.U. they gave you marks for table manners. That was why the C.O. dined in the same hall as the cadets. But duff gen (beloved and extinct phrase) was never more rife than at the O.C.T.U.

They said you were thrown out if you folded your blankets lengthways instead of across. It was advisable to learn whole chapters of the *Manual of Administration* by heart. Otherwise . . . Well, fortunately we hadn't bought our uniforms in advance, like the little tubby man who gave himself away so badly playing hockey. He had been such an exemplary type; then he just let himself go in the excitement of a run down the wing and shouted a most ungentlemanly bit of advice. "R.T.U." for him. Returned to Unit. The shame of it.

However, he may have been lucky. Commissioning was never quite what it was cracked up to be. If only you could have held on to the ranker's point of view it would have been more fun. But no good officer could do that. Otherwise you might have been tempted to defer to the opinion of senior N.C.O.s of fifteen years' service. It was tempting, until you found that any answer will do if delivered loudly enough.

How many of us in this truck have petulantly scribbled a signature that has sent someone to Burma, Iceland, Tobruk . . .?

More lately, the staff work, the paper, the files, the telephones, the buzzers; the astonishing sight of group captains quailing before air commodores, air commodores before air vice-marshals . . . and so *ad infinitum*; as the airman quailed before the corporal, the corporal before the sergeant.

The stink of the exhaust is terrible. Was there ever a truck whose exhaust didn't stink just like this? Coming back from the baths, everybody singing; going down to the Medical Centre, all alone, to have a sudden batch of injections; going on courses, coming back from courses, going on more courses, coming back . . . "Any more for the Camp? 'Op in, mate, let's get weaving"; going out for organized games, organized field exercises, organized rescue-parties . . . always the same *kak-kak-kak-kak* and the same horrible stink, so that sometimes you weren't sure whether it was the stink or something else that breathed uneasiness into your stomach.

When the truck rocks to a halt outside the booking-hall the N.C.O.s drag up the small wooden staircase, and as we climb down we thank them for looking after us. It is the first time we have spoken since leaving the last of our R.A.F. Stations.

"Okay, it's okay," they say, and the weakest of them involuntarily takes his hands out of his pockets. It is the nearest we shall get to our last salute. J. B. B.

Fair Exchange

ALONE cigarette smoker is normal: two together are eccentric. Trilby and Bowler entered a railway compartment and as soon as they had sat down Trilby fumbled in his pocket and produced a packet of cigarettes.

"No! Have one of mine," said Bowler, also fumbling and ignoring Trilby's packet; "it is my turn," he continued almost aggressively.

"No, I had one of yours last time," urged Trilby, thrusting his packet forward with one cigarette standing out invitingly from the neatly packed row.

Bowler had now found and opened an exactly similar packet. "No! please have one of these," he begged, "they are the same brand anyway."

"Not at all; mine were out first," said Trilby.

"No, please!" said Bowler.

"Oh, well! Thank you very much," said Trilby, taking one of Bowler's cigarettes, "but you must have one of mine."

"Oh, well! Thank you very much," said Bowler, taking one of Trilby's cigarettes.

Both put their packets away and fumbled again. Trilby produced a lighter and Bowler a box of matches.

"Save your matches: they are scarce," said Trilby, but Bowler had already extracted a match and he struck it just as Trilby's lighter clicked into flame.

"Thank you!" said Bowler, drawing at Trilby's proffered lighter.

"Thank you!" said Trilby, drawing at Bowler's proffered match.

• •

A Shut Note to Me Reeds

(By a shord-story rather.)

IAM a every proud man.

I am nod only a martyr of the shord-stories, but at last have learnt the nag of pudding them down in should-hand.

Now these saves a lod of writing. It is zo essay too. All I have to do is sid and thank. Then, when the idees come into my had, I pud them down in shoothand and give the paper to my sec to my secret to the girl who tips for me, and she tips it out in ordinary England as you our reading it noo.

The booty of it is that if one oozes

shoothand the spelling can be left to the girl, and won is able to concen able to won is able to get down to the chob of thanking.

As many of my reeds know, my stores are every good and I usually mangy to please them. But for noo on I hop to give which better valoo.

An other thing I found was that it was zo essay to lean. It toog me a fort a ford a three weeks that was all.

In fagged after that it was no ooze wasting tim chegging it. My seg sec large larger largely same sign for language thing young ah the young thing only has to put it doon gusty as I have given it to.

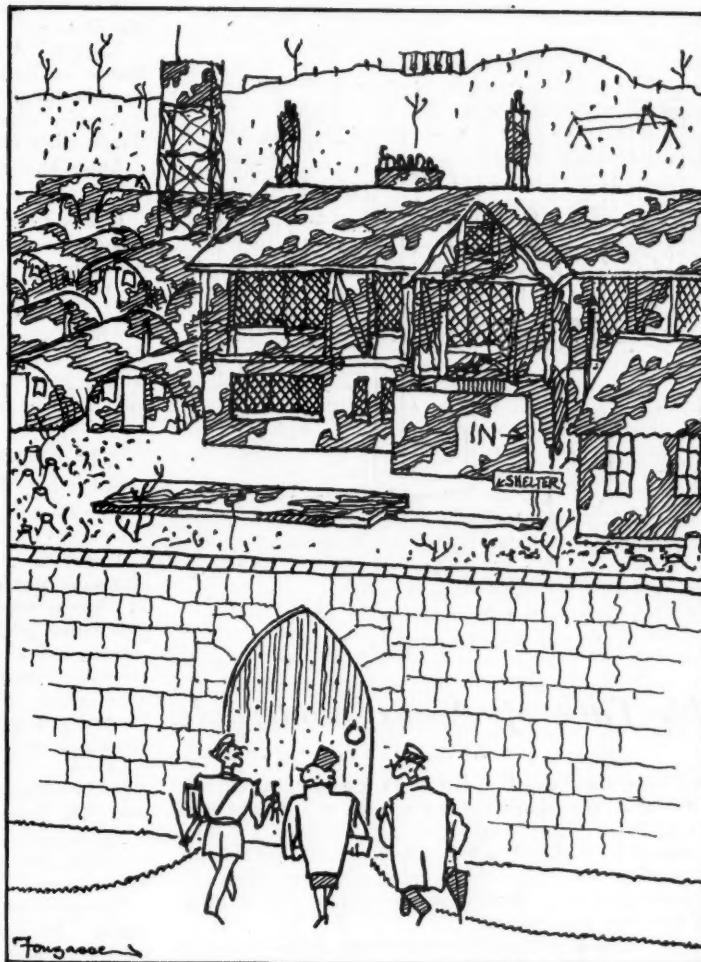
I am surprised at himself. At first I did not thank it would be impossible.

That was a ford a ford a feud I will get it a flutenight ago.

The young language I have told you about said she could not every see me leaning shoothand. In fagged she was so shore about it she told me she would lead me tag her out won night if I every wrote a store in shut-hant.

Well. To-night I tag my sec my secret secret I will I will tell I will tell you live loaf love mist must most important join the words must join the words my secretary that is it secretary oot to wine and din.

You see, my dear reeds, all you have to do is concen dot for con fool make up your mind and it cannot be done. Jeerio!



"Yes, I think you'll find the place pretty well just as you left it when we took it over."



"I've kept all his letters."

Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XXV

THE lamented death of Logan Pearsall Smith reminds me of an occasion when, as a crack at someone who had been contradicting him, Amos observed "More and more often do I feel called upon to quote that remark by Logan Pearsall Smith—'It seemed so simple when one was young, and new ideas were mentioned, not to grow red in the face and gobble!'"

Here he sat back and looked complacently at his opponent, a slight figure with a knobby nose, who could, perhaps, have been described as about five years his senior.

The man—he had an acid, reedy voice—showed fight. "Is that a hit at me?" he demanded. "Because it's totally uncalled-for. For one thing I was *not* gobbling, and for—"

"Oh, come," said Amos. "Certainly you were."

The other slapped the table and said "I deny it. I appeal to the rest of you," he went on, looking round. "Would you say I was gobbling?"

Nobody confirmed that he had been. Amos burst out irritably "Not obviously, perhaps, but any sensitive spectator— It was a kind of ghostly gobble, a hint of gobbling. Nothing you could put your finger on perhaps."

"Well," said the man, apparently a little mollified. "Well, and anyway—in the second place, even if I could have been said to be gobbling—in the second place, your idea couldn't by a long chalk be said to be new. So I still say the quotation was uncalled-for."

"Not new!" ejaculated Amos, outraged at once.

"It comes under William James's pragmatism," said the man with the reedy voice, leaning back and looking complacent in his turn.

Amos began to splutter: "William James! Why— Anyhow, the way you dismiss it—'It comes under pragmatism,' of all the fatheaded ways to—"

"That's growing to be generally admitted. It's a fresh way of looking at it perhaps, but once you get used to the idea—"

"Never," Amos exploded. "I can tell you at once that that is one idea to which I shall *never*— Why, confound it, man, pragmatism has always been—"

A voice from near the bar interjected "'It seemed so simple when one was young, and new ideas—'"

Amos blew out his moustache and scowled.

* * * * *

It was some time after this that the man who had last spoken was inquired about by a newcomer who had never seen him.

"Oh," said Amos, "you'll always find him in here about six. Try to-morrow; we may not be here, but *he* will."

"But I don't know him. How shall I recognize—"

"You can't mistake him," said Amos. "He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and he both looks and talks as if he hadn't been able to get it out yet."

* * * * *

"The trouble—I am not for a moment suggesting the *only* trouble—with the unthinkable," said Amos, "is that it has, by definition, been thought."

* * * * *

There was a time not long ago when he took to asking strangers questions about their jobs, recording the answers in what he described as "an ordinary twelve-and-sixpenny notebook." What may have soured his taste for this pursuit was the occasion when he said to a man who had the appearance of a navy—and was, to be sure, carrying an immense hammer—"Do you find that when you're knocking a spike into the road, the number of hammer-strokes is quite unreasonably modified by the demands of *rhythm*?"

At first the man appeared to be thunderstruck, then he said "Oh, I see what it is. You think this is *my* hammer."

Amos said, "Isn't it?"

"Why, no," said the man. "Belongs to the Barnsley Corporation."

There seemed no easy way to bring up the first subject again. Amos did his best to pass the matter off by peering into his notebook and saying to the rest of us "I never told you, did I, about that man who said he earned his living by firing small shot into portions of restaurant rabbit?"

* * * * *

"... Just as," he said once, "one will sometimes see, from the top of a bus in the City, a beautiful girl looking up from the pavement apparently almost straight into one's eyes, but with a lost expression... The reason being that she is really searching with anxiety on the indicator for the name 'Hampstead.'"

There was a wistful, fragrant pause until at last somebody piped up "East Hampstead or West Hampstead?"

But Amos was in a sentimental mood and nothing, for the moment, could put him out. "East Hampstead, West Hampstead, Finchley, Islington, Golders Green," he murmured dreamily, "Clapham, Chelsea, Kensington, Catford, Dulwich, S.E.21—"

We had to make quite a fuss over getting more drinks before we could snap him out of it.

* * * * *

An enormous bullet-headed man in tweeds, describing some acquaintance of his, at last produced as if it were an eloquent and pithy summing-up the statement "*He comes up to my chin.*"

Amos said, "Often?"

R. M.



"No, mate. A RIGHT hook to the head and then a short-arm jab to the body."

Pictures

WHEN we moved into our new flat about three months ago Edith and I agreed that we would not hang up any pictures.

"This post-war resettling," she said, "is a grand opportunity for us to reform. Before the war our walls were disfigured by pictures scattered about with a Victorian lavishness. We will not spoil our nice new yellow walls with any such excrescences."

As I was still suffering from aches and pains in every limb after laying the linoleum I was pleased to be saved the further labour of picture-hanging, and gladly put our total stock of pictures under the stairs. We have one of those under-the-stairs cupboards black as the pit of Erebus, into which extraordinary quantities of things can be put without filling it up. Nothing, however, can ever be got out without taking everything else out first, and anybody entering the cupboard invariably trips over something and knocks something else off a shelf on to his foot.

Our rooms, however, were not destined to remain pictureless, because in attempting to put up a pipe-rack on the wall I made a large hole before I discovered that it was one of those walls to which nothing can be fixed. Most of our walls are like that.

"The landlord will be mad if he sees that," said Edith. Our landlord lives upstairs, and sometimes pops in on the plea of borrowing a hammer, but really to peer round the

rooms and see if we have sold the fittings or used any of the doors for firewood.

"He won't see it," I said. "I'll hang a picture over it."

So we got out all the pictures and examined them. Edith was in favour of an etching of what looked like a cheese-roll but was supposed to be a mountain in New Zealand. She said it was signed by the artist and would be valuable one day when he was famous. Personally I thought that a photograph of myself and my Kugombas in the Sinai Desert would be more cheery. Edith said that she was surprised I should be little-minded enough to want visitors to be reminded that I had been a captain, which she said was really nothing, because nearly everybody else had been at least majors, and personally she thought the picture of herself with her W.V.S. van was far more inspiring.

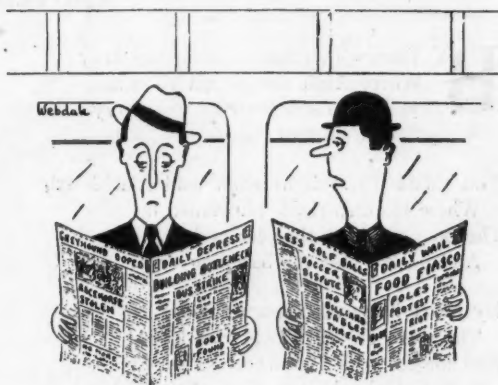
So we put them both up, and balanced them on the other side of the fireplace with a wedding-group and a photograph of Edith's great-uncle giving the keys of something to a duchess in a dress like a barrage-balloon. Neither of us thought much of the entertainment value of this latter picture, but it was the only one we had of exactly the right size.

"We had better put a few more up," said Edith, surveying them critically. "I think it is rather a good idea to have either a lot of pictures so that you don't notice them, or none at all."

By evening a perfect rash of pictures had broken out in the room, and then we put the remainder back under the stairs and called it a day. A few weeks later the distemper in the bedroom began to peel off, and we put up a large coloured print of the "Fighting Téméraire" to hide it. This looked odd by itself, so we hung a dozen or so more and found that there were only seven pictures left under the stairs.

"It would be a good thing if we could use them all," said Edith wistfully. "It is so nice to think nothing is being wasted."

Although the last seven were mostly family portraits circa 1850, which even in our reactionary pre-war days had been kept in the attic, they have all been stuck up somewhere, and as I lie in bed I have to suffer the disapproving gaze of a man with very large mutton-chop whiskers. I am only thankful that I managed on my final visit to the pit of Erebus to put my foot firmly through the face of his brother, who had even larger whiskers and the additional disadvantage of pale fishy eyes. If he had survived he would have had to go in the bathroom, and I do like to take my baths alone.



"What a blessing we're restricted to four pages."



"I'm not late, am I?"

Current Numbers

BY Yarrow's streams still let me stray
Where Alph the sacred river ran,
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray
In the sweet shire of Cardigan.

And Eastward straight from wild Blackheath
Where Roslin's chiefs unconfined lie,
The boat rocks at the pier of Leith
And hushes half the babbling Wye.

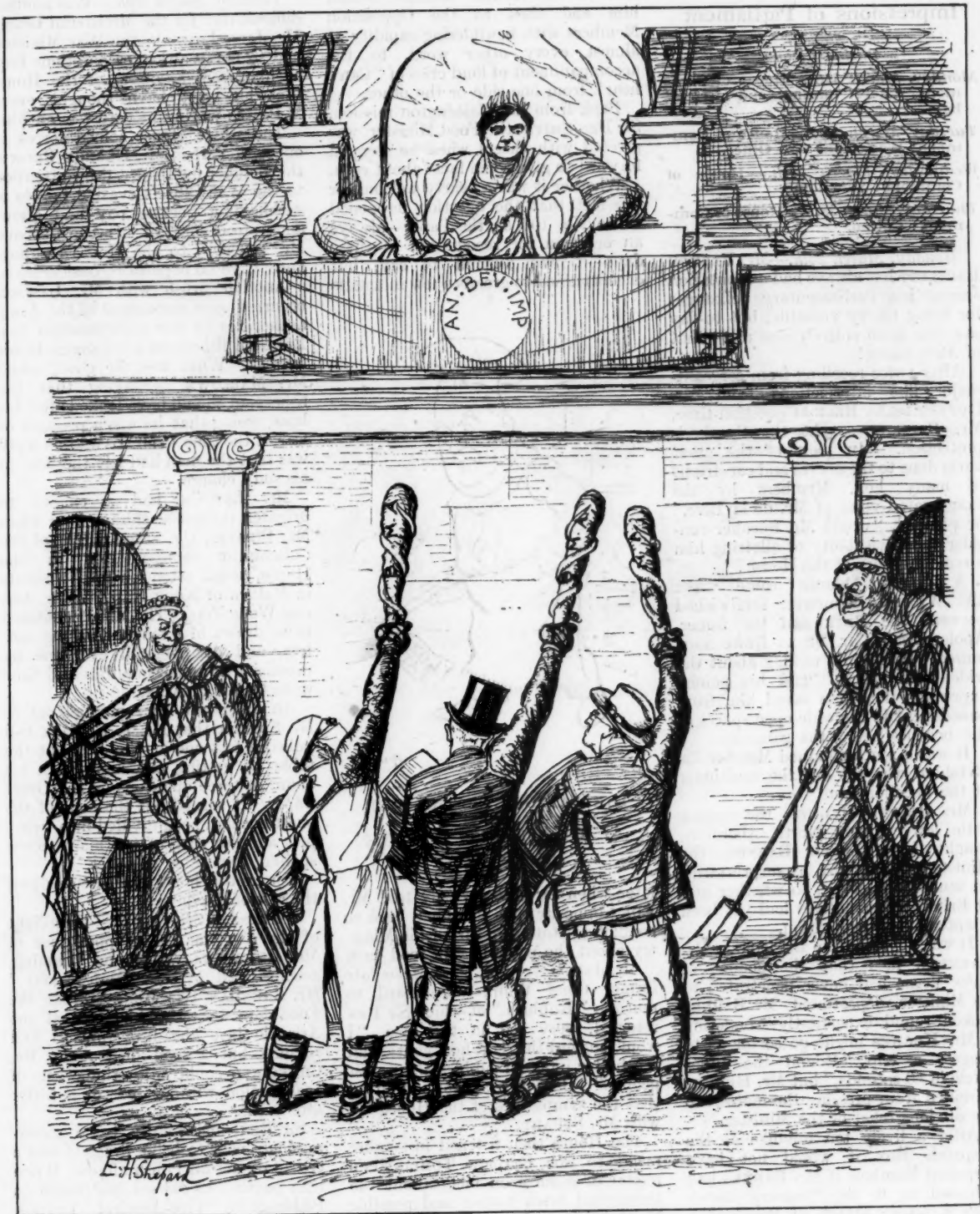
My heart leaps up when I behold
The swan on still St. Mary's lake,
And gorgeous dames and statesmen old
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break.

As I went down the waterside
That never knew the summer woods
Where the remote Bermudas ride
Beside the haystack in the floods,

I wandered lonely as a cloud
By Arno to my lovelier Tees.
(My head is bloody but unbowed
Among the furthest Hebrides.)

And coming to the banks of Tone
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
Still lay my head by Teviot stone
All downward to the banks of Till.

J. B. N.



MORITURI TE SALUTANT.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, March 25th.—House of Commons: "Bère" taming—and "Brick" bats.

Tuesday, March 26th.—House of Commons: War on the War Office.

Wednesday, March 27th.—House of Commons: Safe home.

Thursday, March 28th.—House of Commons: Cotton.

Monday, March 25th.—Mr. VERNON BARTLETT has always had a reputation among his Parliamentary colleagues for being pretty versatile, but to-day saw him in an entirely new rôle—that of Bère-tamer!

After twice recoiling from sergeant-major-like interjections from Mr. RUPERT DE LA BÈRE at question-time, Mr. BARTLETT sought the Speaker's protection. "In view of the great harm done to the nerves and ear-drums of many hon. Members by the exaggerated voice of Mr. de la Bère," he pleaded, "would Mr. Speaker consider the advisability of allotting him a remote corner of the House?"

A grateful glance came from Mr. WILFRID ROBERTS, sandwiched between the BÈRE and the tamer. Apologetically Mr. DE LA BÈRE murmured "I was only talking about the wide open spaces," and his pained expression doubtless saved him from banishment to the wide open spaces of the benches below the gangway.

It was a much-subdued Member for Evesham who sat out the remainder of the question-hour.

Mr. HECTOR HUGHES, the dapper little lawyer from North Aberdeen, caught Mr. ALFRED BARNES, the Minister of Transport, by surprise with an innocent query as to whether any of Britain's locomotives had yet been adapted to jet propulsion.

It was obvious from the look on Mr. BARNES's face that the shades of Jules Verne had never penetrated to the Minister's department. Mr. BARNES looked round expectantly wondering if Mr. HUGHES might go so far as to suggest a trip "Round the Inner Circle in 80 seconds," but Mr. HUGHES refrained from pressing the matter, to the obvious relief of the Minister.

After a lively ten minutes at the Dispatch Box it would not have surprised Members if Mr. BARNES had subsided on to the Treasury Bench with a severe attack of Wimbledon neck. Ignoring the practice of addressing all his remarks to Mr. Speaker the Minister persisted in answering supplementary questions by turning his head

first to the Labour benches behind him and then to the Opposition Members with bewildering rapidity at almost every other word, to the accompaniment of loud cries of "Can't hear" from one side or the other.

Back from his Washington mission, Sir BEN SMITH, the Food Minister, was greeted with cheers when he stepped forward to give some facts about eggs.

Whether it was a hearty welcome or the fact that the question happened to be No. 100 on the Paper—always an occasion for recognition in these days—it was difficult to say, but cheers turned to groans a few moments



THE FAT OUT OF THE FIRE

THE MINISTER OF FOOD

later when Sir BEN breezily told Mr. EDEN opposite that there had been no conflicting statements from his Ministry about the possibility of food cuts.

Mr. JAMES STUART, the immaculate former Chief Whip, was heard to murmur "Rubbish," at which Sir BEN retorted, very red in the face, "I would suggest the right hon. gentleman is a better judge of rubbish than most people." But it must be admitted that the sympathies of the House lay with Mr. STUART.

The House then listened in sombre mood to Mr. GEORGE TOMLINSON's recital of some grim facts about the threatened brick famine and possible housing delays. It gave the Opposition an opportunity to hurl a few more brickbats at the Government, but Mr. TOMLINSON dodged them all with considerable skill.

Tuesday, March 26th.—Was another difficult day for the Ministerial bench. Mr. JACK LAWSON, the War Minister, had so many awkward questions fired at him from all parts of the House that he must have thought every M.P. was waging private war on him.

The whole House joined forces in opposition when Mr. GEORGE BROWN, the Member for Belper, drew attention to the War Office's evasive tactics in withholding Service pay and allowances from one of his constituents. Mr. LAWSON, to the House's annoyance, gave no hope of reconsideration.

Another brush with Mr. LAWSON occurred over the refusal of the Army authorities to pay compensation to a Brighton fisherman for damage to his trawler. What was the good, asked Mr. MARLOWE, of saying that the fisherman should have looked after his boat, seeing that he was a prisoner of war at the time? Mr. LAWSON's reply was that the man had left the boat in his son's charge.

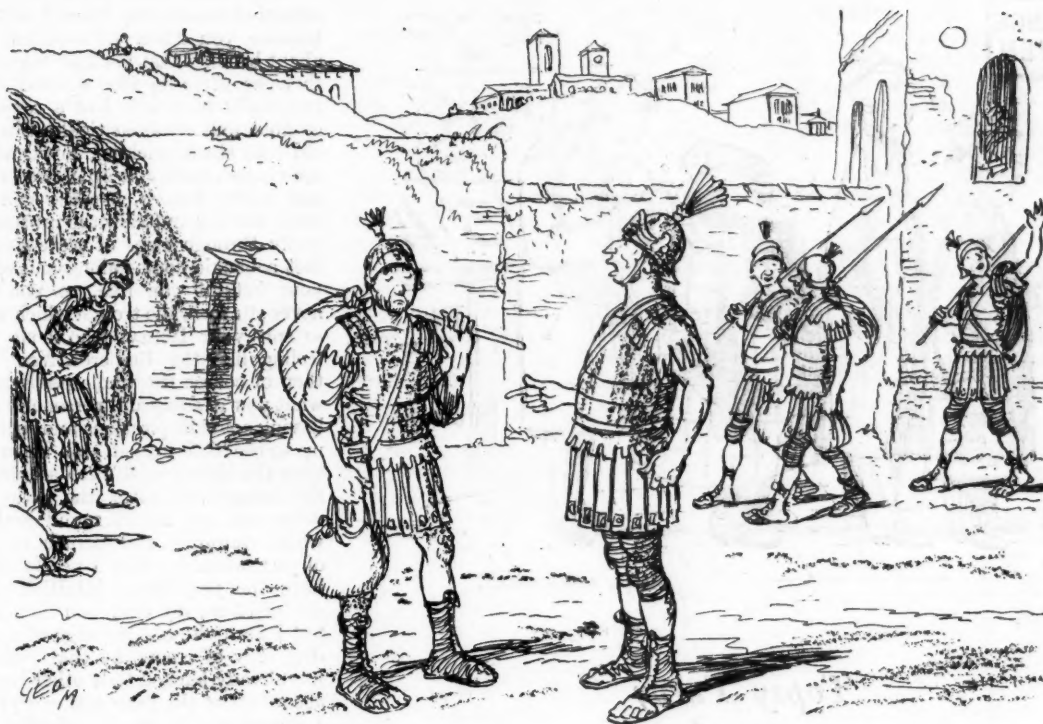
Mr. LAWSON had a chance to brighten the not-so-shining hour when Mr. PIRATTIN, the Stepney half of the Communist representation in the House, called attention to the arrests in Malaya of Kong Kang, Wang Ann and Wong Tong. The Minister refused to be drawn in a tongue-twisting contest, and disappointed everyone by promising to make inquiries and then write to Mr. PIRATTIN.

An observant Tory pointed out to Mr. Speaker that Mr. T. F. Cook had pulled a fast one on the clerks at the table by getting one more than his quota of three questions on the Order Paper. It turned out that one of the questions had been divided into two—just another case of too many cooks spoiling something or other.

Yet another housing debate occupied the rest of the day.

Wednesday, March 27th.—High-light of the day was the reappearance of Mr. CHURCHILL, pink and beaming, accompanied by his "Man Friday," Mr. BRENDAN BRACKEN. Unlike the Food Minister, who had crossed the Atlantic just ahead of him to find nothing but a load of trouble, Mr. CHURCHILL could enjoy the sweets of acclamation without fear of a bitter aftermath.

Sir BEN, incidentally, came embarrassingly near to being dragged into a cross-talk act on Polish affairs. When that pugnacious old sea-dog (based on Paddington) Vice-Admiral TAYLOR asked Mr. ERNEST BEVIN for an assurance that the Polish Government would safeguard the liberties of repatriated Poles, the Foreign Secretary side-stepped with the remark: "I am



"I'm afraid your demobilization will have to be postponed indefinitely—you've been selected to tour Gaul as a member of the Legion's quiz team."

never satisfied before I eat my breakfast, but I am afterwards." Mr. EDEN and his Opposition friends signalled to Sir BEN beside the Foreign Secretary to tell them how he provided a satisfying breakfast for his portly neighbour, but Sir BEN refused to be drawn into such intimate details. The House then settled down to a serious discussion on land acquisition.

Thursday, March 28th.—The cotton "barons" turned up in force to hear Mr. OLIVER LYTTLTON open the attack on the Government's decision to close the Liverpool cotton market. His "child's guide" to transactions in cotton futures did little, however, to unravel the mysteries of the world's most peculiar market. Before "spinning his yarn" he conjured up a curious picture of Mr. HERBERT MORRISON doing a "cloak-and-dagger" act. Mr. LYTTLTON suggested that Mr. MORRISON was wearing the cloak of the absent President of the Board of Trade and at the same time plunging a dagger into the heart of a substantial section of British trade. In spite of that it was a good debate.

Why "Warble"?

MEN call it "Warble Fly"

And, be it noted, I
Have on the question *Why*
Been sometime racked,
But I have gained the strong
Impression, right or wrong,
That it's a thing of song;
Warbles, in fact.

It may emit a coo
As the soft pigeons do
Or twitter from the blue
In laverock-style
Or, like Miss Tox's bird,
Utter, when really stirred,
A piercing scream that's heard
For some half-mile.

Do raptured listeners hush
Hearing th' ecstatic gush
Of what they deem a thrush
From somewhere nigh

Or, when deep shadows fall,
Stand tranced at Progne's call
Not knowing, after all,
That it's a fly?

One would give much to know
If morning bids it crow,
Or does it presage woe
Like the dark corbel?
Maybe it merely stings
Cattle and sheep and things.

* * * * *

Yet I suppose it sings
Or why say "Warble"?

DUM-DUM.

o o

Another Insurance Hoax

"There were 69 boxes of industrial and uncut diamonds made of transparent and bullet-proof plastic, and insured for £150,000."—*Daily paper.*



Topsy Turvy

XXIV

TRIX my dumb darling unless I get the most copious letter from you quite soon I shall terminate relations, one utter from you in three weeks is not a ration, and that about your pestaceous friend Fork who Haddock says No he can not ask a question about he must go to a lawyer, and yes it's too right it seems a man can't marry his divorced wife's sister though if it was deceased but Haddock's out and why I have no clue about, as for Fork H. said if he'd gone to a lawyer ab ovo he might not now be in such an inscrutable mess, anyhow there are far too many Questions nowadays and Members believe it or not can not interfere with the decisions of Judges neither in the New Era can they germinate Bills, as I think I've told you uncountable times, tenthly and lastly Haddock said why doesn't Fork write to his own etcetera Member, sorry darling for this comparatively barren response, but you tell me quite nothing about the children, have you done a thing about Phil's teeth, no darling no cheese has won through yet though Haddock had a moving parcel of tinned provender from an old flame in Dominion Australia, here in Parliament England, that by the way is the said thing now because of Soviet Russia, Oh yes and

Congress America, well here in Parliament England a few frightened daffodils are peeping round corners, two newts are courting in the pond which whatever the poets say is the first sure sign of the Parliament English Spring, and by the time you get this the Boat Race will be over, that is if both crews don't sink in a snowstorm, and of course why they have all these events in the rudest weather, school Sports for example those mournful waifs in less than undies, with bright blue calves and their little noses steaming like horses, and of course icicles all over the audience.

Talking of sport we had a hilarious though uneconomic evening at the grey-dogs yesterday, Haddock by the way is enraged because they're putting a cruel purchase-tax on sailing boats which they say are Sports requisites, though how they expect to have a nation of Dunkirkers, and Haddock says if boats why not race-horses and race-dogs, my dear what mountains of taxes you'd amass when they sell those fabulous stallions and things, and for that matter what about when Arsenal or Charlton buys a centre forward for £30,000, than which few things could be more like a sports requisite, anyhow about the grey dogs, I goaded Haddock there for the first

time since '39 because it was Jean Dee's birthday and I rather think he's rather attracted, some bait there had to be because you know he's rather aloof about betting, that is till he begins and then he dives in like a mad thing, personally of course I'm a congenital gambler and my spine tickles when the old tote starts clicking, my dear you must come one day, it's quite decorative and rather Roman, because you dine while betting and view the proceedings cosily through acres of plate-glass, in fact a bookie comes along and collects your bets if you like, so you need never stir from the trough which would so suit your Henry, who'd sit there feeling like the Emperor Nero, only then of course the whole party knows what you're doing and personally I like having secret inspirations and prowling up to the Tote myself, well when they turn the lights on it's too scenic, like the largest race-game, the little dogs come out and march round with six white stewards, and parade in front of you, when my dear I nearly always have the profoundest intuition about one of them, my dear you may laugh but I am quite a sage judge of a grey-dog, only of course by that time one has already backed three other beasts according to the form and everything, I should say by the way darling that dog-following is no idle pleasure, one works like a slave, my dear I'd studied the naps and things in three papers, all too different, then of course some wide-hearted man comes and marks your card, quite different again, and then I have my last-minute intuition, so as a rule there are few beasts I have not got something on in the end, which, Haddock says is girl's gambling, though if he's an example of man's, there are only 20 minutes between the races and what with collecting on the last race and deciding on the next, life is asthmatic, it's like doing an arithmetic exam against time not to mention dinner, one canters off to the Tote in the middle of a mouthful, the table is a mass of race-cards and naps and tote-tickets get into the soup, then they put the little dogs in the cage and the fairy hare starts circulating, and when my dear it whizzes past the cage and they cataract after it, about two-thirds of the little tummy stops working and does not resume till minutes after the finish, so after about three races I have barbarous indigestion however it's all in aid of the summer holiday, so one suffers gaily, Haddock at first was too lofty and quite content with Jean and a juniper-juice not to mention some rather palatable turbot, though somewhat vexatious about the Betting Tax in which none of us at that

time could be *much* less interested, and after every race he would say he'd *diagnosed* the winner *at sight* during the parade, and if he'd been betting and so on, the bleak thing was that after the turbot he really began to *believe* it and started wagering in a large way, my dear talk about *girl's* gambling, first of all he'd choose two grey-dogs with nice *names*, you could *not* get him to back a beast with what he calls a bad name if it had a half-mile *start*, then he picks one because of its lovable *walk*, and nearly always he does Number two because it has a *blue* wrapper and he's sensitive to blue, then he asks what I'm on and invests in that *likewise*, so at the end he's on *all* the runners but one or two, *which* of course finish *quite* first, my dear calamitous because *till* then I'd been raking in *reasonably* and the summer holiday was about *six* Peppiatts nearer, but now Haddock is on my

hounds not *one* thing goes well with them, my dear they're *jostled* at the bend or fall *fatally* at hurdles, the hurdling by the way is *quite* electrical and while they're doing that one *practically* forgets one's degrading *money*, there's the closest finish *twice*, my dear *three* little snouts on a half-sheet of notepaper, each time of course I could have *vowed* that my *pet* beastie was first, though of course *too* prohibitive to be sure, because Haddock says by his slide-rule which I do not utterly believe in they're doing about 35 miles p.h., I should have said *sixty* myself, so now they have the *photo-finish* which is *absolute* magic, we saw the works, and in *quite* no time you can see a *dry* print, only of course each time my *pet intuition* hound owing to the *baneful* Haddock influence was *third* and out of it by two hairs or half a nostril, *malignant* luck, and so it went on, Haddock my dear wagering

wilder and wilder and your little friend's winnings *quite* melting away, *what* Haddock lost has *not* been promulgated, all he said was that he would *not* have minded if there'd been a *Betting Tax* and he'd contributed *something* to the *Exchequer*, which in all the circumstances the rest of us did *not* think was Utterance Number One, Jean and her mate being downish likewise and quite unallergic just then to the *Exchequer*, as for me I have rarely felt *less* cordial to the Exchequer, we then withdrew for *solations* draughts with some of the dog-heads, and the sequel is comparatively *nebulous*, only I seem to remember something being said about our *acquiring* a race-dog, I can not envisage *why*, because *where* are we to keep it and what will it *eat*, anyhow it's *too* sure to be last *always*, if you're *not* careful I shall call it Tongue-tied *Trix*, no more now Topsy.

A. P. H.



At the Play

"MURDER ON THE NILE" (AMBASSADORS)

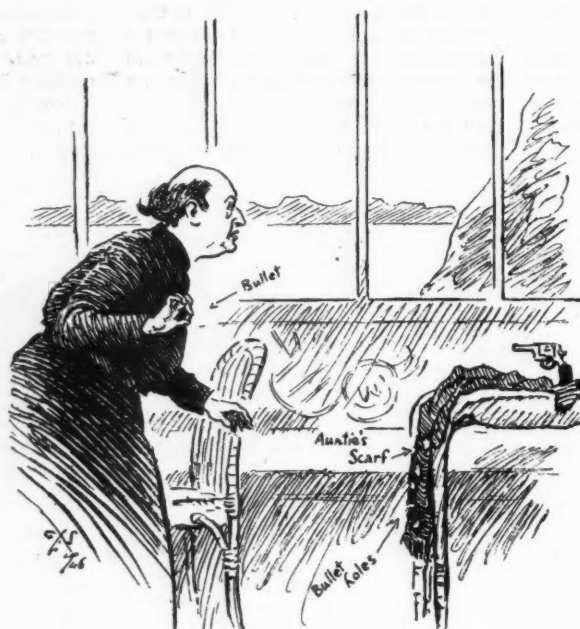
MISS AGATHA CHRISTIE's new play is somewhat artificial in method, but of its kind it makes an effective evening in the theatre. It is an evening *sans* Poirot, a High Church clergyman with an unexpected knowledge of police chemistry doing the criminological honours instead. The action takes place in the saloon of a small steamer. Among the passengers is a spoilt young heiress and her husband, on a honeymoon dimmed by the malicious presence of a girl he has jilted. This embittered young woman is full of rancour; it only remains for her to be full of brandy as well for her revolver to go off and for the husband to go down clutching his knee. When his wife is found in her cabin killed with a bullet of identical calibre things look too bad for the revolver's owner until an unassailable alibi is produced for her. (It is often found convenient by organizers of week-end massacres, Society *battues* and morgue-cruises to include one person of incandescent virtue whose word will be instantly credited by the most mean-minded member of the audience. Such phenomena easily earn their keep as anchors and referees. Here Miss CHRISTIE provides an Edinburgh ingenue of a freshness recognizably above suspicion.)

We are asked, then, to pick the slayer from the ingenue's aunt, a farcical old snob without apparent motive; a young Communist peer, *incog.* (and in corduroys, which he must have found very hot on the Nile); the deceased's French maid; a kindly German doctor whose family has been ruined by the industrial piracies of the deceased's father; and the girdled priest, a resounding man-of-the-world who has used his position as her guardian to fatten his pet charities.

The dénouement is cunningly contrived, but of a mechanical order. Similarly the characters, though adequate pawns for the crime game, are flattish creatures whom one feels are

drawn from a card-index of types rather than from life. Miss CHRISTIE, in fact, though always technically at ease, is not, humanly speaking, in her best form. The play is excellently acted by a cast which includes Miss ROSEMARY SCOTT (victim), Mr. IVAN BRANDT (husband), Mr. DAVID HORNE (clergyman), Miss HELEN HAYE (aunt), Miss JOANNA CHERRILL (the innocent, particularly good), Miss VIVIENNE BENNETT (jilted markswoman), Miss JACQUELINE ROBERT (maid) and Mr. RONALD MILLAR (clenched fist).

The ship is moored throughout, so that Egypt remains discreetly stationary.



SLEUTH ON HOT SCENT

Father Borrowdale Mr. DAVID HORNE

"MACBETH" (WINTER GARDEN)

Apart from the sound of bagpipes in their agony, issuing to my huge personal discomfort from the windy depths of the orchestra, Mr. DONALD WOLFIT's *Macbeth* is dissociated from the rugged north, and indeed, from the evidence of his palpably Ming moustache, it might be a tragedy of the Orient. Not that it greatly matters where you site Shakespeare, for you cannot zone him as if he were fish; but I must say I like a dash of tartan with my weird sisters.

I put this production above Mr. WOLFIT's *Othello* but below his *Lear*. It rises smoothly to the great climax of the greatest crime-play of all time,

and poetically he gets its measure, but as a piece of theatre his performance seems to me lacking in the highest art which merges the personality of the actor in his subject. One is conscious that this is Mr. WOLFIT playing *Macbeth* (though playing him well) when the horror of *Macbeth*'s situation should have driven all thought of his interpreter out of one's head. I think the fault lies in a tendency to over-stress the melodramatic in the part.

Miss PATRICIA JESSEL, a fine young actress, gives a good account of herself as *Lady Macbeth*, though her work is not yet on the grand scale, and Mr. RAYMOND JAQUARELLO's *Macduff* is bold and honest.

"MAKE IT A DATE" (DUCHESS)

To bring the ghost from *Blithe Spirit* trespassing in its ancient haunt is one of the few bright ideas in this disappointing revue. With one or two exceptions its sketches are below par, and its songs are not much better. The two main props are Miss AVRIL ANGERS and Mr. MAX WALL. Miss ANGERS has a gift for satire which seems to me full of promise. She is never extended here by anything except a nice little crack at the herbalists, but she shows signs of a first-rate sense of irony. Mr. WALL is a difficult comedian to describe. He has a certain eccentric brilliance, but he relies overmuch on a limited rota of facial contortions which one begins to know too well before the evening is out. At his peak, as in a long, preposterous scene at a piano, he is very funny.

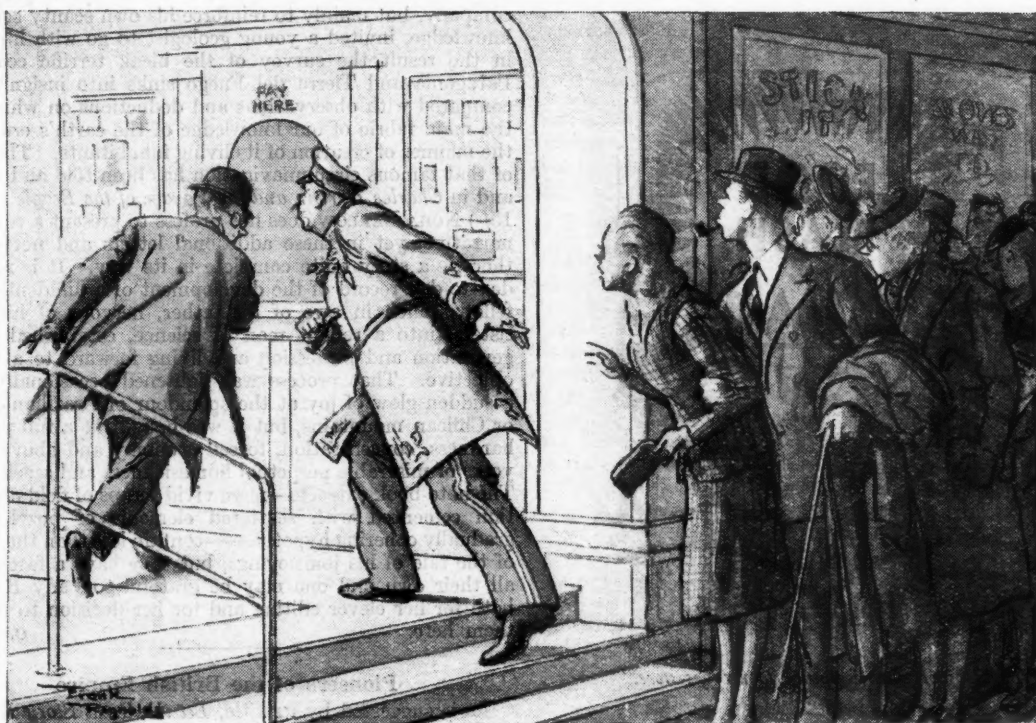
There is quite a good burlesque on advertising by Mr. RONALD JEANS, and there is an almost complete waste of that capable comedian, Mr. BILLY LEONARD, who has only one real opportunity, as a horrid little boy, and makes the most of it. There are useful contributions by Miss MARIANNE DAVIS and Mr. LEIGH STAFFORD, the chorus can dance and some of Miss ANNA DUSE's dresses are attractive. But what is urgently wanted is wit.

ERIC.

Flower of Diplomacy

"A pact is a thing that covers a plant. It is cast when it comes into flower."

Schoolgirl's answer.



"Here, you can't walk straight in like that. What do you think all these people are queuing for—amusement?"

A Man Lends His Car.

DEAR BRIAN,—Sorry I missed you. I estimate there is enough petrol in the car to take you fifty miles. Attached is a coupon for one gallon which will take you another thirty-six miles. Please don't use it all.

The car is rather a tricky one, so please watch the following points:

Method of Starting. Please don't use the self-starter.

- (a) Insert key.
- (b) Fix choke in "out" position by pulling out and wrapping a duster round it.
- (c) Insert starting-handle (you will have to kneel on the ground to do this, as a bit of tin from somewhere has fallen in front of the inside socket).
- (d) Wind ten times—which sort of eases everything up and generally gets car ready for initial shock of starting.
- (e) Switch on.
- (f) Wind again and car should start.

Oil. Watch carefully; top up religiously every twenty miles with about one pint (there is a gallon jar

and a funnel somewhere amongst the stuff where the back seat should be).

Water. Watch carefully also. Sometimes the water stays in the radiator for days and days, then disappears all of a sudden, so don't be lulled into a sense of security.

Punctures. When you have a puncture, change the wheel (all the gubbins for this is in the back seat place) and run very slowly to the nearest garage and get them to mend the puncture and put the original wheel back, as the spare is badly buckled.

The Lights. Don't go out at night; the lights run the battery down too quickly—or if you must, only use the side lights.

The Brakes. These are O.K. at the moment, but sometimes the rods that connect the pedal-workings to the brake-drum come adrift (jangle-jangle as you go along). If this happens just go very slowly till I come back.

Going Round Corners. The shock-absorber suspension bar sprocket connections—or something—are very weak, so go carefully, especially when

turning to the left, as one of the back tyres scrapes on its mudguard when you do this.

The Licence. This is somewhere amongst the dusters and oddments in the pigeon-hole on the dashboard.

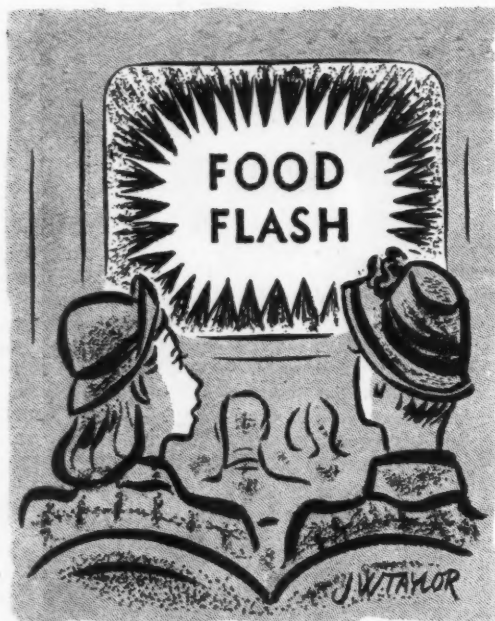
Locking the Car. Please do this at night. There is something wrong with the lock, so if you can't, undo it in the morning lift up the windscreen a bit and squeeze your arm in and undo the door from the inside.

Give my love to Margaret. I'll be back on the Sunday evening train.

Yours, PETER.

The Poet Explains.

YOU must be awfully clever
To write a triolet.
Have no doubt whatsoever
You must be awfully clever.
So just remember never
To let yourself forget;
You must be awfully clever
To write a triolet.



"That's just what happened to MY gas-stove."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Mirror to Canada

To be born in Ontario, in an old house redolent of barrelled apples, and to make the acquaintance of America as a small smuggler of unconsidered trifles across the ice of the St. Lawrence, is surely an enviable introduction to Canada and the U.S.A. When one adds that Mr. BRUCE HUTCHISON is a journalist of British stock, with a sympathetic appreciation of every element in his country's European and indigenous ancestry, you will expect *The Unknown Dominion* (JENKINS, 12/6) to be the lively, intelligent and supremely serviceable book which, in fact, it is. It exhibits Canada, from Nova Scotia to Vancouver, with enough glances at past history and future problems to illuminate an engrossing present. Neither British nor American, the Dominion is described as a necessary link between both her best customers. Her peculiarly vulnerable economy, with its critical dependence on world markets, would keep her, sentiment apart, their ally. The author evinces a personal preference for Quebec's predominantly French culture; but he manages to describe Montreal without quoting Samuel Butler. His Indian place-names are enchanting—one polysyllabic rival to the well-known Anglesey record-holder being translated as "The Place where Branches are Torn Off the Trees by Bears Gathering Beechnuts." H. P. E.

Science at Sea

Captain Robert Fitzroy, R.N., may well have thought when he set sail for South America in 1831 that his was to be the principal part in one of the most hazardous voyages

of an adventurous century. He had however, partly for company, but mainly to reinforce his own scanty scientific knowledge, invited a young geologist to go with him, and in the result the survey of the bleak terrific coasts of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego sinks into insignificance compared with observations and deductions on which rest the main fabric of our knowledge of the earth's crust and the manner of creation of its living inhabitants. The story of that famous circumnavigation has been told and retold, and in *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle* (PILOT, 15/-) NORA BARLOW does not profess to present a complete narrative, yet in these additional letters and note-books there is a story quite complete in its way. It is really a day-to-day record of the development of a diffident young fellow, much in awe of his father, nervous of his elder sisters, into a reliant man of science, established in his generation and profession and living forward to a visible objective. That process was lightened occasionally with a sudden glow of joy at the splendour of Brazilian forests or Chilean mountains, but it was bought at a full price in hardness, concentration, forced economy and above all of years of miserable perpetual homesickness and seasickness. The note-book extracts—mere vivid scraps of field observation cemented with scattered elements of puzzled but gradually cohering hypotheses—contain less than the letters of the tale of his journeyings, but they have a fascination all their own and one may be grateful to Lady BARLOW both for her clever editing and for her decision to include them here. C. C. P.

Pioneers of the British Empire

As is suggested by its title, *Let the Great Story Be Told* (SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON AND Co., 18/-) is an ardent rebuttal of the view that our Empire has been acquired by piracy and unscrupulous aggression. Its author, Mr. H. WOOD JARVIS, while not neglecting such famous names as Clive and Warren Hastings, Wolfe and Cecil Rhodes, has made it his main object to celebrate a number of remarkable men who have hitherto received less than the praise due to them. The result is a vivid and stimulating volume, even though readers of a sceptical temper may feel that some at least of Mr. JARVIS's heroes have now received rather more than their due. Mr. JARVIS opens with an account of John Smith, the best known of the original settlers of Virginia. His early exploits against the Turks, three of whom he slew in a series of single combats fought in the presence of the Christian and infidel hosts, are at least as thrilling as his later adventures among the American Indians. But as he is the main authority for his astonishing adventures, it is difficult to understand why Mr. JARVIS should be so greatly impressed by Smith's self-effacement over his own exploits. After Smith, the most extraordinary of Mr. JARVIS's heroes is Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who eloped with his first wife and, after her death, abducted a school-girl. Three years in Newgate jail turned him into a profound thinker on colonial matters and the chief shaper of the lines along which New Zealand has developed. H. K.

The Foundress of St. Anne's

A many-sided, highly-cultivated woman with a rare gift of desiring "definite things . . . in an impersonal way," *Grace Hadow* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 10/6) has provided her old friend Miss HELENA DENEKE with a congenial subject for a biography. For those less concerned than these two accomplished ladies for the spread of purely academic culture, Miss Hadow is more interesting in her origins and her off-time than in her career, which

began with a First in English and ended in the Headship of the Society of Oxford Home Students. Behind this lay a poor Gloucestershire vicarage, whence a heroic mother wrote "But for the blessing of our children, I do not know what we could do." The vicarage wisely concentrated its resources on food and good rearing; and Grace's elder brother and godfather (the late Sir Henry Hadow) proved a stand-by to his sister and god-child. Later in life she worked indefatigably for Women's Institutes; but she seems to have underrated the indigenous culture of her native Cotswold. Even Cirencester, her widowed mother's home, was branded as (from the Oxford standpoint) hopelessly illiterate—although an admirable novelist, one of Ruskin's best-beloved correspondents, must have been one of Mrs. Hadow's near neighbours in the early nineteenth-hundreds.

H. P. E.

On Teaching

In *We Who Teach* (GOLLANZ, 10/6), JACQUES BARZUN, who spent his early years in France and is now a professor at Columbia University, has written a witty and penetrating commentary on teaching in general and American teaching in particular. In his opening remarks he deals with the paradox that while the school-teacher is still regarded as an underpaid pitiable drudge, education is expected nowadays to contain the cure for all the ills that afflict humanity—"An influential critic . . . wants education to generate a classless society; another asks that education root out racial intolerance; still another requires that college courses be designed to improve labour relations . . . Above and beyond all these stand the unabashed peacemakers who want Kitty Smith from Indiana to be sent to Germany, armed with Muzzey's *American History*, to undo Hitler's work." His own purpose in this book is to go through what he calls "this vast sideshow of illusions and misplaced effort" and indicate the limits within which a teacher should work and the methods he should employ. After many fresh and suggestive remarks on such trite themes as how to teach composition and literature, science and history, he passes to American collegiate administration, with its "serried ranks of secretaries and stenographers that make the European feel he has wandered by mistake into some annexe of a large business concern"; to the American passion for university degrees; to the laying out of educational funds in useless research; and to the principles which should govern the relations between students and instructors.

H. K.

Trout

Having brought up his own children to the joys of fishing with the fly, Lt.-Colonel T. H. BARNES has put his experience as a teacher into a most helpful little book, *Catching Trout* (HERBERT JENKINS, 6/-), which his wife, Mrs. JOY BARNES, has illustrated with attractive cuts and diagrams. Colonel BARNES has an eye for essentials and the knack of putting things clearly. He writes racily with an uncondescending modesty which children will be the first to appreciate, and he butters his instructions with exciting accounts of his own fishing adventures. Some West-country parents may be slightly shocked at his advocacy of a greased line for wet-fly, but all will applaud his stern insistence on keeping out of sight and his keen sense of the unending fun of being by a river. From the same publisher, at 8/6, comes another small book, *Angling for Brown Trout*, by Mr. A. R. HARRIS CASS, for whom the dust-jacket makes the rash claim that "a blank day is never now his lot." This author is obviously a knowledgeable fisherman, but unfortunately his literary methods are not as neat and direct as his casting must be. "... spending a holiday with an

angling uncle, that benign relative took me under his piscatorial wing and initiated me into the ostensibly secret art" is a fair example of his style. He achieves his unbroken success with only four patterns of fly, wet or dry: Pheasant Tail, Tup, Blue Upright and Black Gnat. The most useful chapters are on where fish lie and on time and weather. So far as I know, this is the first fishing book to give minute instructions on how to eat a trout.

E. O. D. K.

"Underneath a Bough"

There is romantic promise in the idea of a story about a man who pays off his dead friend's debts and then marries (on strictly friendly basis only) the helpless widow after bringing a toy all the way back from England to Kenya for the orphaned baby who is not loved enough. When one remembers that before all this the hero had allowed himself to be divorced for the sake of the honour of a brother officer who had taken too great a fancy to his wife, and that he searches out his heart philosophically and finds comfort while sitting under the shade of an evidently significant umbrella thorn, one would scarcely expect the reader to leave a dry page in the book. Yet Mr. PETER DE POLNAY has succeeded in reducing all the characters in his book, *The Umbrella Thorn* (HUTCHINSON, 10/6), to such a level of drabness that it is impossible to care what happens to them either in Kenya or in England, or to mind that Gloria is unworthy and Betty, her friend, hateful, while the hero suffers (or so one supposes) in between his musings beneath the bough. Even the baby is rather squalid and blows bubbles almost as frequently as the eccentrics in the neighbourhood raise their elbows. Mr. DE POLNAY can write well enough and observe so keenly that it is a pity he has brought such unhappy specimens to our notice.

B. E. B.



"And let's hope this teaches you that crime doesn't pay."

Willingly to School

YET another of the things I have learned about writing is that the barriers are going down between fiction and non-fiction. All over Europe, and other well-known continents, the lamps of pure learning are going out while splendid new neon lights advertise education with a smile and a song.

In what we can now see were the bad old days in education the poor student had to fight his way paragraph by paragraph, footnote by footnote, through the manuals of his reluctant choice. No wonder so many of us went unwillingly to school. It was a dozen or so years after we had all left school and had abandoned our desperate private attempts to repair the obvious deficiencies in our mental equipment that the text-books suddenly began to improve. You must have noticed this. Any father, on first looking into his child's primer, is struck by the remarkable advantages enjoyed by the younger generation. The stuff of learning has changed out of all recognition.

Even where the text and format are unaltered the difference is amazing. The book seems smaller, more manageable. The sentences seem to hang together better and the word "the" no longer seems to stand out so clearly as a target for a pencilled houp-la. The channels between the words are less obvious and the end-papers do not seem in need of decoration. Even the illustrations, those diagrams of Wheatstone's Bridge, Faraday's Ice-Pail Experiment, and so on, seem enough in themselves and our fingers no longer itch to add the cat or the racing steamer without which Physics seemed so meaningless to the members of IVA and the Remove.

But I am getting away from my point. The text-books have altered. They have undergone a thorough humanizing process which has left them, even the driest of them, as breezy yarns with real live characters bobbing up on every page. And, thank goodness, this progress has now reached the non-fiction of the adult! Compare this passage from Morgan and Ashcroft's *Principles of Political Economy*:

"In essence the participating kartell

with selling syndicates is an agreement whereby competing firms establish for a prescribed period a joint-selling agency charged with the exclusive rights for the sale and disposal of the products of the competing firms, each manufacturing enterprise being allotted a quota or participation . . ."
—with this, from Hugh Anskill's *This is Business*:

"They found a cab and drove out to Alec's place. The tops of the hills were shrouded in masses of white cloud. The trilling of the cicadas drowned the roar of the engine and made conversation difficult. But Tom was still a little puzzled by the bit about the participating kartell with selling syndicates and soon his thoughts frothed over into speech.

"You say," he said, leaning his head on Anna's shoulder, 'that this kartell is an agreement whereby competing firms establish for a prescribed period a joint-selling agency charged with the exclusive rights for the sale . . .'

"The noise of the cicadas grew in volume as the cab swerved to avoid a small *haëca* and for a few seconds Tom's voice was engulfed. Anna laughed.

"How you are *drôle*," she chuckled. "That made Tom laugh, too, with that rare infectious laughter of his. And even when he had resumed his chatter you could still see where the

laughter had been in the little lines round his eyes and in his cheeks.

" . . . a joint-selling agency charged with the exclusive rights for the sale and disposal of the products of the competing firms,' he went on, 'each manufacturing enterprise having permission . . .'

"Yes," said Anna, 'I do.'

"And further," said Tom, 'you say that each manufacturing enterprise is liable to fines or compensation in the event of their output of goods . . .'

"Merchandise,' cut in Anna.

" . . . output of merchandise exceeding or falling below the established quota?'

"I do, indeed," said Anna.

Tom smiled. All his doubts had vanished. He realized that in Anna he had a friend who would know how to deal with the participating kartell with selling syndicates, a woman who . . ."

You see what I mean? The difference is amazing. In Anskill's book the economics is unobtrusive; you pick it up in passing, as it were. A highly useful by-product of an enthralling piece of escapist fiction.

The moral is obvious. Writers of rejected non-fiction should go through their old manuscripts again just as I feel Dr. Brent Ulmwood must have done before he achieved this passage in his *Sermons in Stones* (Lattice and Cumberbatch):

"They waited on the ledge while Norman's ankle healed. Then they lit their pipes and moved off again in single file. They had scarcely travelled another hundred feet before the party was halted by a cry from James.

"The crack plane of a fault is usually filled with crushed fragments derived from the rock-walls of the earth-movement which has produced the fault,' he said.

"Dr. Ormstone nodded and climbed gingerly over the shales before replying.

"But this is fault-rock or fault breccia,' he said, 'and the conjunctions of such rocks are often characterized by slickensides.'

"We sat down and took out our sandwiches . . ."

Have you ever seen geology half as readable as that? HOD.



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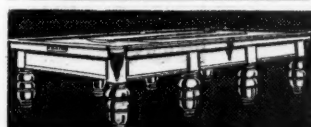
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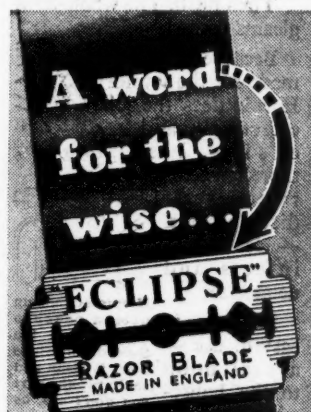


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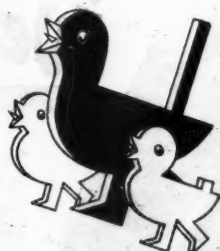


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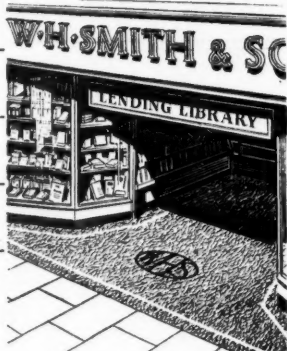


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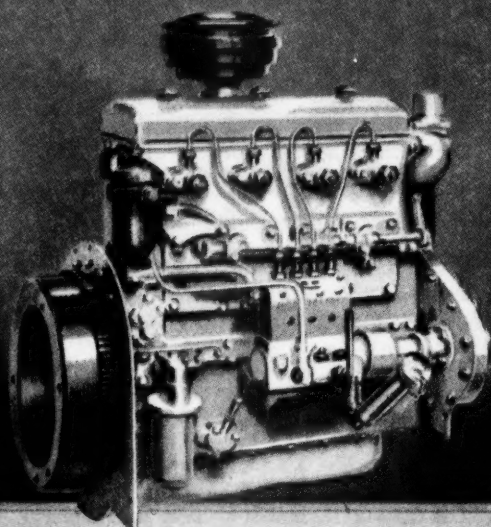


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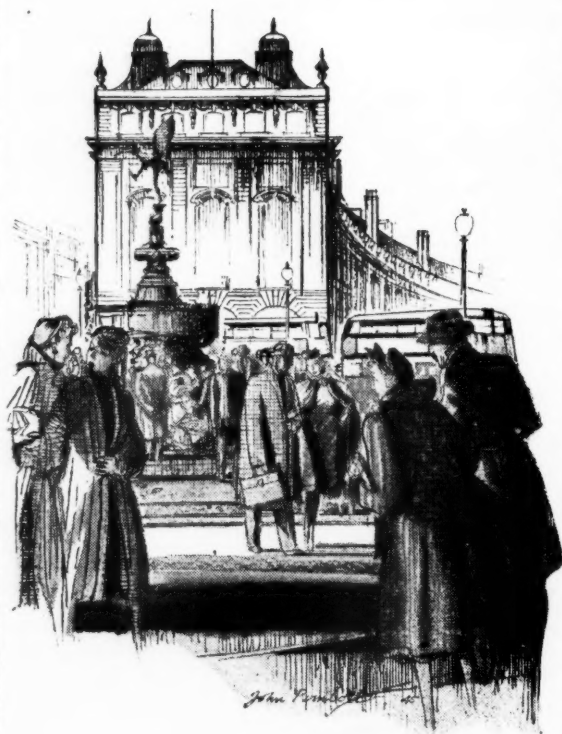
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